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Mr. Chairman, Congresswoman Millender-McDonald, and Members of the Committee, I am pleased to appear before you today to testify about the background, processes and current state research of the House IT Assessment Project. My colleague Larry Bradley and I and many others have invested a significant amount of time and thought over the last two years to make this project a success. The best thinking of Gartner, the Congressional Management Foundation (CMF), this Committee, and the House officers and officials has gone into this project. Our work has been reviewed at key points by Members; senior managers in leadership offices, committees, and Member offices; and high level House technology experts. We have also incorporated the views of staffers throughout the House into this project.

Our goal was to design a process that would engage key people throughout, facilitate collaboration and deliberation, and encourage the best possible thinking about the future of technology in the House of Representatives over the next ten years. Our focus was on the business of the House and the processes that Members and staff use to perform their work. Rather than focusing first on technology, we let the challenges and opportunities Members and staff face be our guide to identifying technology that would help Members and staff be as efficient and effective as they wanted to be. To this end, we wanted to collect the best possible information to allow us to produce solid, defensible conclusions that would generally be agreed on by Members and staff. We believe we have succeeded in our efforts, and we are pleased to present to you a summary of where this project stands, what we have learned, and what the next steps are for completing this project.

1. Project Background

In August 2004, the Committee on House Administration (CHA) and the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) initiated a project to develop a vision and plan for the future use of technology in the House of Representatives. To support this project, CHA initiated a partnership between Gartner and CMF. Gartner is an internationally-respected technology research and consulting firm with extensive experience assessing and developing technology strategies for federal, state and local governments and Fortune 500

corporations. CMF is a non-profit organization that provides management services to Congress and, through its work, has developed extensive knowledge of House operations and technology use in the House and in other legislatures. Throughout this project, Gartner and CMF have been working closely with the majority and minority staff from CHA and the CAO and his staff.

This project is being conducted in the following stages:

1. Current state research;

2. To-be vision roundtable discussions;

3. Gap analysis;

4. House IT decision making working group; and

5. Strategic technology roadmap.

We would like to elaborate briefly on each of these stages and provide an overview of the objectives for each, the processes we used at each stage, and the key finding that have resulted.

2. Current

State Research

The first phase of this project was to conduct extensive research with House stakeholders and technology experts. We conducted detailed interviews with 128 individuals with expertise on the House, which included interviews with Members; officers and officials; senior managers from leadership offices, committees, and Member offices; professional and administrative staff throughout the House; select legislative branch technology specialists; and individuals outside the legislative branch with expertise on House operations and technology. The focus of these interviews was on the opportunities and challenges Members, staff, and the institution currently face and expect to face in the foreseeable future, and on how technology is being used in the House and the impact it is having on Members, staff, and the institution.

At this phase of the project, we also conducted a literature review of documentation and research on House technology adoption over the last ten years, which included a range of relevant reports, testimony, policy documents, and publications.

Through our research, we identified several forces that are exerting pressure on the House to integrate technology more thoroughly and more rapidly, factors that inhibit technological adoption and change in the House, and some key findings that have continued to resonate throughout this project. Following are descriptions of each of these.

Forces for Change

The forces we identified as exerting pressure on the House to integrate technology more thoroughly and more rapidly were:

1. The looming budget crunch.
There was general agreement that there will be continued belt-tightening throughout the government in the coming years, and that the legislative branch would need to identify opportunities for cost savings.

2. Increasing security demands.
In the words of one House officer, "it's not a matter of whether, but when." There was a clear sense that the House needs to be prepared for more security crises in the future and that technology can play a critical role in creating a more secure work environment and ensuring the continuity of House operations.

3. Increasing comfort of new Members with technology. Businesses and state legislatures provide capabilities and services that in many cases exceed what is offered in the House. Consequently, new Members are increasingly demanding that the House enhance its capabilities and services.

4. Increasing communication and information demands by constituents and the press. Technology has raised public expectation for communicating with, and receiving information from, the House. Member offices are struggling with rising volumes of constituent communications; committees are struggling with demands for greater access to their information and activities; and institutional offices like the Clerk, GPO and the Library of Congress are struggling to keep pace with public expectations. These public demands will continue to evolve and exert further pressure on the House for change.

5. Continuing integration of technology into society. The premise that House operations are going to be changed by technology is generally accepted by Members and staff. Over time, our society and our institutions will become increasingly connected; communications capabilities will continue to increase; and information access will continue to proliferate. As a knowledge-based institution, the House will need to be responsive to these trends.

6. Increasing demands of the legislative

cycle. Technology has enabled documents and legislation to be produced and considered more quickly than ever before. As a result, speed has become a strategy in the legislative process. In this environment, technology can provide opportunities to improve Member and staff access to information and enhance the effectiveness of the institution.

These factors were generally viewed as compelling reasons for the House to think strategically about technology now and to begin planning for change. There was a sense that these forces will impact the House one way or another, whether or not the House is prepared for them.

Institutional Challenges

The House faces some significant challenges in its efforts to most effectively integrate technology into its operations over the next ten years. The challenges are not the result of mismanagement or anything the House has been doing wrong. Rather, they largely stem from policies, practices, and traditions that have been in place for decades increasingly coming into conflict with modern capabilities and demands. The House is experiencing pressure felt by the corporate community in the mid 1990's, and which resulted in e-commerce. The executive branch began to feel the same pressure in the late 1990's, and it is resulting in e-government. The House and other legislatures are now beginning to grapple with similar pressures. Traditional operations are being tested by modern technologies, and institutions are being forced to adapt. The House will be no exception.

The factors identified as being the greatest challenges to more thoroughly integrating technology into House operations were:

- Lack of standards.
At present, Member and staff electronic access to important legislative information is limited by lack of standard practices, timeframes, document formats and systems for creating and providing access to official legislative documents (bills, amendments, committee reports, public law, etc.). Because the policies and processes of each organization involved in creation and production of legislation and law - including the Office of Legislative Counsel, Parliamentarian, committees, Office of the Clerk of the House, Office of the Law Revision Counsel, and the Library of Congress - are different, it is difficult and costly to facilitate better, easier, more timely electronic access to official legislative documents. If systems and efforts could be more standardized and coordinated, there would be great potential to increase efficiency, enhance effectiveness and access, and reduce the cost of producing legislative documents.

- Lack of House-wide
technology coordination or authority. There is no House office or entity with the mandate or authority to plan and coordinate House technology resources, projects, and expenditures and to ensure they are targeted to institutional goals and needs. There are organizations with authority over some aspects of technology decision-making but none have the mandate or authority to coordinate beyond their own jurisdictions. As a result, conflicts and redundancies occur and costs are higher than they might be if efforts were coordinated.

- Disparate systems.
The House is unable to take advantage of opportunities for increased efficiency, effectiveness and cost savings because systems and processes are being developed in disparate "silos." This is a common challenge faced by institutions attempting to make a transition to more thorough technology adoption and use. The political, public, and decentralized nature of the House, however, increases both the difficulty of breaking down and integrating silos and the likelihood of turf battles.

- Lack of resources.
Technology has placed new demands on Members by their constituents, parties, and staffs. Members must react more quickly and more frequently to more people than ever before, and their offices depend on technology to operate smoothly. However, Member office resources are not keeping pace with the demands on Member offices to operate what are, essentially, small businesses; be responsive to constituents; and conduct their legislative and political duties.

For the House to most effectively implement the ten year vision, these challenges will need to be directly addressed and overcome.

Key Findings

The findings that resulted from the current state research were extensive, but there were several that have been resonating throughout this project. They encompass a range of issues that have been raised again and again, and they appear to be at the heart of the challenges Members, staff, and the institution face as well as the opportunities for technology to help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Members, staff, and institutional operations. As a result, these findings have risen to the forefront of this project. They are:

1. There is a need for enhanced electronic access to legislative documents. Members and staff repeatedly expressed concern that they do not have adequate or timely enough electronic access to the legislative documents they need to effectively fulfill their duties. Although staff have come to rely on a variety of electronic sources of information, they do not feel these sources provide all of the information they require. They were particularly interested in expanded electronic access to committee information, legislation being considered on the House floor, and "just in time" information related to floor and committee schedules, votes, and recent committee action. Both Members and staff expressed interest in having the best possible electronic access to legislative information, which includes more than just access to resources. They also want information to be available in a timely fashion and in user-friendly formats that improve their efficiency and help enhance their effectiveness.

2. Members and staff are experiencing information overload. House offices thrive on information, the volume and pace of which has been steadily increasing over the last few years, which has made it difficult for Members and staff to effectively manage the information and efficiently conduct their work. As a result, workdays have been steadily increasing in length. In this information-intensive environment, Members and staff try to keep up with the demands of their jobs while being bombarded by communications from constituents, the press, committees, leadership, institutional offices and their colleagues. Increases in the volume and speed of information have not been met with increases in resources to help Members and staff manage it.

3. There is an increasing need for greater Member and staff mobility. In light of both concerns about maintaining continuity of House operations in the event of an emergency and

advances in technologies and capabilities that can support the inherently mobile work styles on Capitol Hill, Members and staff are becoming increasingly demanding of expanded capabilities to conduct their work from wherever they are. Although the House provides capabilities for working remotely, few Members and staff have access to all of their mission-critical information when they are mobile. This significantly decreases their productivity and time-sensitive decision-making capabilities while they are away from their offices or away from the House.

4. There is a need to minimize the cost of supporting technology in the House. Although many technological components and services in the House have attained commodity status, offices do not realize pricing concessions or economies of scale that come from purchasing as a large organization, rather than as a single office. While there are House technology standards that drive what is supported, those standards allow for considerable variation, which drives higher support costs from Systems Integrators, their own system administrators, and the HIR TSR's, which must treat each system as unique rather than as a standard model. As a result of these factors, Gartner calculates that the House spends one third more on technology than comparably-sized organizations.

5. There is a lack of House-wide coordination on major technology projects and initiatives. IT decision-making is currently conducted in silos across the House, with no individual or organization responsible for coordinating or prioritizing these decisions on an institution-wide basis. This results in higher technology costs, conflicts, and redundancies, as well as technologies that do not meet the most critical needs of Members and staff. Additionally, most senior managers confine their role in technology decision making to determining whether or not their budgets can handle the investment rather than actively setting direction for decisions. As a result, technology decisions that impact important House and office business processes are usually made without the involvement of those responsible for the performance of the House and House offices.

The results of the current state research were described in detail in report entitled House IT Assessment: Revised Current State Report, which was delivered to the House in early 2005.

Through our current state research we laid a solid foundation for the House IT Assessment Project. We knew as we moved forward what opportunities the House could realize through technology and what challenges it faces as it continues to integrate technology into its operations.

I am going to leave it to my colleague Larry Bradley to discuss the vision for the House of the future that was built on this foundation. I hope that, together, we will provide you with not only a good idea of what we've done, but also an understanding of the positive impact this project could have on Members, staff, and the institution in the years to come. Thank you, again, for the opportunity to be here today. I look forward to answering your questions.